



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE (CSNR)

Selection Criteria Checklist

Pioneers of National Reconnaissance

Overview. The spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage, and the Congress and President have declared that the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people. The selection criteria for Pioneers of National Reconnaissance support this objective.

Pioneers are to be selected as a means to ensure that the vital legacy of the cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits derived from their contributions to the discipline of national reconnaissance will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans.

Qualifying Factors. In administering the historic resources of national reconnaissance in a spirit of stewardship for the inspiration and benefit of present and future generations, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) selects Pioneers of National Reconnaissance based on five qualifying criteria that reflect the degree to which the individuals' contributions to the discipline of national reconnaissance are: (1) relevant, (2) innovative and pivotal, (3) unique, and (4) time-tested.

1. *Relevant.* The pioneering contribution must be relevant by being directly related to the discipline and practice of national reconnaissance. National reconnaissance is defined as technical intelligence collection funded by the National Reconnaissance Program and carried out by the NRO under its mission to conduct research, development, acquisition, launch, and operation of overhead reconnaissance systems and other activities as directed, to include NRO communications infrastructure. National reconnaissance activities include, but may not be limited to:
 - a. Conceiving and planning, or successfully developing a sensor, an aerial or satellite system, a communication system, or an orbital application that greatly improved overhead intelligence collection.
 - b. Organizing, leading, or successfully managing the teams that designed, fabricated, launched, or operated a new and complex reconnaissance system that greatly improved national reconnaissance intelligence collection.
 - c. Conceiving and planning, or successfully developing a new technique, procedure, or method that greatly improved the evaluation, interpretation, cryptanalysis, information processing, or dissemination of information collected by national reconnaissance systems.

- d. Conceiving and planning, or successfully developing a new acquisition technique, contracting procedure, or security measures that greatly benefited the government in the procurement and operation of national reconnaissance systems
2. *Innovative and Pivotal.* The pioneering contribution must have been an innovative and pivotal contribution to the discipline and practice of national reconnaissance. The contribution must have been innovative enough to have changed the direction and scope of conceiving, developing, managing, or operating national reconnaissance activities. It must have made a pivotal change in activities such as: (a) national intelligence collection and analysis; (b) aerospace and reconnaissance technology; (c) reconnaissance-based information operations; or (d) other activities related to the practice and discipline.
3. *Unique.* The pioneering contribution must have been unique in that it was a “first and only” technological breakthrough, idea, concept, or way of doing business.
4. *Time tested.* The contribution must have demonstrated its value by being “time-tested” for its historical impact. It must have had, or demonstrated evidence that it is highly likely to have, a lasting historic impact. It is often difficult to recognize the long-term impact and historical significance of more recent contributions. Because of this, the Pioneer Selection Board will focus on contributions made more than ten years ago and typically defer the consideration of any candidate whose contributions and achievements were made for activities that occurred within the past five years.

Disqualifying Factors. Pioneer recognition is for a specific innovative pioneering contribution that has made a major impact on the heritage of national reconnaissance, influencing the present and likely to continue to influence future national reconnaissance activities, and its historical significance has been tested by time. Those factors that place the contribution outside that context are disqualifiers.

1. *Awarding government personnel general performance*—The use of pioneer recognition as a life-time achievement award or human resources awards, such as for sustained superior performance, would disqualify the nomination. The NRO Awards Program and human resources-related awards are for that purpose.
2. *Contract performance* —The use of pioneer recognition in connection with a contract award fee process or other such contract performance awards would disqualify the nomination. Individuals who are employed by Government contractors are ineligible when their contributions are related directly to their current contract work.